

The Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation (VA MCBFD) Program



Why is breastfeeding important?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Human milk can help build the developing immune system of infants. AAP supports continuing breastfeeding for as long as mother and baby desire (for 2 years or more), while introducing appropriate solid foods at 6 months.

For infants, breastfeeding reduces the risk of asthma, diarrhea and vomiting, ear infections, eczema, lower respiratory infections, Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC), Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and Type I Diabetes.

For mom, breastfeeding reduces the risk of certain types of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and Type II Diabetes.

Program Mission

The Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation honors birthing facilities that are committed to creating an atmosphere to promote human milk feeding to the families and patients they serve. All birthing facilities across Virginia are eligible to apply!

The VA MCBFD Program is an opportunity for facilities to evaluate their efforts to promote breastfeeding. The framework for this program is based on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, which is internationally recognized and considered the gold-standard for breastfeeding promotion.

How does a hospital apply for designation?

Birthing hospitals submit an application for the program virtually, through REDCap. Facilities may apply for as many steps as they choose, in any order. Baby-Friendly designated hospitals submit an expedited application to verify their award. Find a list of designated facilities [here](#).



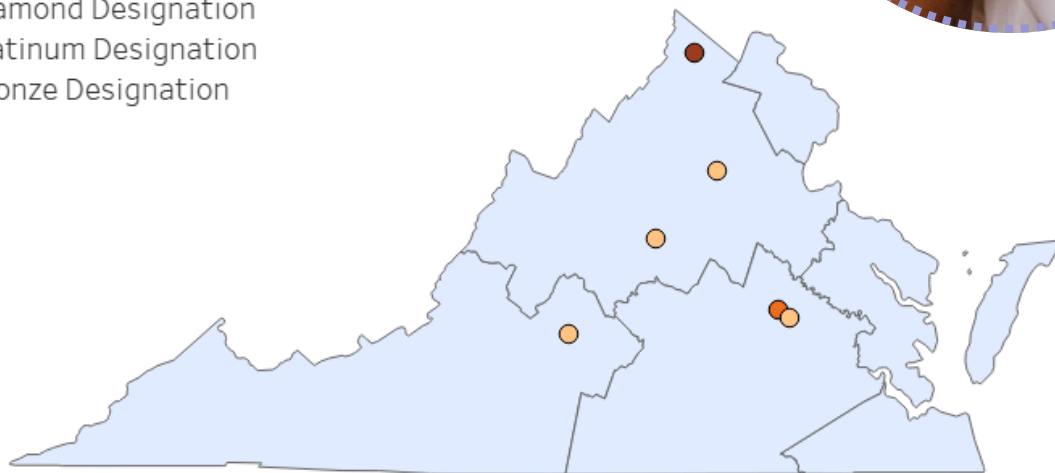
Program Award Medals

Birthing Facilities in Virginia with Breastfeeding Friendly Designation



Designation

- Diamond Designation
- Platinum Designation
- Bronze Designation



Facilities with a Diamond Designation as indicated above earned this status due to their current Baby-Friendly USA Designation.

Finding Breastfeeding Data

For more breastfeeding data, check out the resources below!

PRAMS, or the **Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System**, is one of the few data sources for breastfeeding that provides a snapshot for Virginia. PRAMS surveys a sample of mothers who have recently given birth. Questions cover a range of topics including information about experiences before, during or after a pregnancy.

The **Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey** is conducted annually by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Eligible hospitals are asked about their practices related to infant feeding and nutrition to assess how they are providing an atmosphere that encourages breastfeeding. Reports for each state can be found [here](#).

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** provide a database for breastfeeding data at the national and state level. Access their interactive dashboard [here](#). To find Virginia data on breastfeeding, select “State View” and choose the Health Topic as “Breastfeeding”. You may select the location as Virginia and see the available data.